Claims

What is claimed:

1. A method for generating a subscriber profile for a
   subscribed user of television or multimedia programming, the
   method comprising the steps of:

   (a)   monitoring user viewing activities;

   (b)   collecting raw subscriber selection data based on
   source material selected by the user over a predetermined
   period of time;

   (c)   evaluating the raw subscriber selection data to
   filter out irrelevant data and generate a record of actual
   subscriber selection data; and

   (d)   processing the actual subscriber selection data to
   create a subscriber profile.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the source material
   corresponds to analog video, Motion Picture Expert Group,
   digital video, Hypertext MarkUp Language material, and other
   multimedia source material supplied by a provider of the
   television programming to the user.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises the step
   of monitoring volume control commands initiated by the user.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises the step
   of monitoring channel change commands initiated by the user.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises the step
   of monitoring record signals initiated by the user.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) comprises the step of extracting source related text from the source material.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the source related text includes one or more descriptive fields.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the source related text is extracted from an electronic program guide of the source material.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the source related text is extracted from one or more HTML files related to the source material.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein the source related text is extracted from the close captioning information of the source material.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) further comprises the step of monitoring time durations wherein the time durations correspond to viewing times of selected source material.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises the step of evaluating channel change commands and associated viewing times.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of filtering out any channel change commands if the associated viewing times are below a pre-determined threshold.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the filtered out channel change commands correspond to channel surfing activities.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the filtered out channel change commands correspond to channel jumping activities.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises the step of evaluating viewing times and filtering out any viewing periods if no user activity has been received within a pre-determined period of time.

17. The method of claim 17, wherein the filtered out viewing periods correspond to dead periods implying that user is not actively watching the television or multimedia programming.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (d) comprises the step of generating one or more program characteristics vectors based on the subscriber selection data.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the program characteristics vectors are one or more values characterizing the source material.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) corresponds to a n-dimensional program characteristics matrix comprising one or more program characteristics vectors.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) further comprises the step of processing subscriber selection data based on a pre-determined set of heuristic rules.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the heuristic rules are described in logical forms.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the heuristic rules are expressed as conditional probabilities.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber profile is a profile based on the user interests.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber belongs to a household and the subscriber profile is a profile based on the interests of the user household.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber belongs to a household and the subscriber profile is a demographic profile for the user, the demographic profile indicating the probable age, income, gender, and other demographics.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber selection data corresponds to a viewing session and the subscriber profile is a session demographic profile for the user.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber selection data corresponds to a plurality of viewing sessions and the subscriber profile is an average demographic profile for the user.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber profile is a program preference profile for the user, the program preference profile indicating the type of programming of interest to the user.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber profile is a product preference profile for the user.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber belongs to a household and the subscriber profile comprises household demographic data indicating probabilistic measurements of household demographics.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber belongs to a household and the subscriber profile comprises household program preference information indicating probabilistic measurements of household program interests.

33. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber belongs to a household and the subscriber profile comprises household product preference information indicating probabilistic measurements of household product interests.

34. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber selection data corresponds to a viewing session of the user household and the subscriber profile is a session demographic profile for the user household.

35. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber selection data corresponds to a plurality of viewing sessions and the subscriber profile is an average demographic profile for the user household.

36. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber profile is controlled by the user.

37.   The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber profile is
analyzed by a third party for the purposes of marketing and
advertising.

38.   The method of claim 1, wherein the access to the
subscriber profile has been limited to a selected number of
other parties.

39.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of
analyzing the subscriber profile to estimate user viewing
habits.

40.   A data processing system for generating a subscriber
profile for a subscribed user of television programming, the
data processing system comprising:
    (a)   computer processor means for processing data;
    (b)   storage means for storing data on a storage
    medium;
    (c)   a first computer means for monitoring subscriber
    activity and creating a record of raw subscriber
    selection data wherein the raw subscriber selection
    data corresponds to the source material selected by
    the user;
    (d)   filtering means for evaluating the raw
    subscriber selection data and filtering out the
    selection data associated with irrelevant activities
    and for creating a record of an actual subscriber
    selection data;
    (e)   a second computer means for retrieving source
    related information wherein the source related

40.

information contains descriptive fields corresponding
to the actual subscriber selection data; and

(f)   a third computer means for processing the
subscriber selection data with respect to the
descriptive fields to form the subscriber profile.

41.   The system of claim 40, wherein the first means for
monitoring subscriber activity further comprises means for
monitoring time durations wherein the time durations
correspond to viewing times of the selected source material.

42.   The system of claim 40, wherein the first means for
monitoring subscriber activity further comprises means for
monitoring volume levels wherein the volume levels
correspond to subscriber selection volume levels.

43.   The system of claim 40, wherein the filtering means
are configured with pre-determined heuristics rules.

44.   The system of claim 40, wherein the filtering means
filter-out the selection data associated with channel
surfing activities.

45.   The system of claim 44, wherein the channel surfing
activities are recognized by recognizing the channel
change commands issued by the subscriber and then
evaluating the associated viewing times.

46.   The system of claim 40, wherein the filtering means
filter-out the selection data associated with channel
jumping activities.

47.   The system of claim 46, wherein the channel jumping
      activities are recognized by recognizing the channel
      change commands issued by the subscriber and then
      evaluating the associated channel numbers and viewing
      times.

48.   The system of claim 40, wherein the filtering means
      filter-out the selection data associated with dead
      periods.

49.   The system of claim 48, wherein the dead periods are
      recognized by recognizing the channel change commands or
      volume change commands issued by the subscriber and then
      evaluating the associated viewing times.

50.   The system of claim 40, wherein the subscriber profile
      contains household demographic data indicating probabilistic
      measurements of household demographics.

51.   The system of claim 40, wherein the subscriber profile
      contains household program preference information indicating
      probabilistic measurements of household program interests.

52.   The system of claim 40, wherein the subscriber profile
      contains household product preference information indicating
      probabilistic measurements of household product interests.